



State Senator
Bruce Patterson

P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LANSING, MI
PERMIT NO. 1200

Stay Alert Against Fraud

Nearly 25 million Americans fall victim to consumer fraud each year. Senior citizens are especially at risk. In fact, according to the U.S. Postal Service, 60 percent of the victims of prize or sweepstakes fraud are age 60 or older. And seniors are increasingly targeted in investment scams.



The Michigan Legislature has passed strong consumer protections against identity theft and spam. Yet even with tough laws in place, being an informed consumer is the best protection against fraud and deception. Senator Patterson reminds you to help safeguard your personal information by keeping these tips in mind:

- If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.
- Don't be pressured into making an immediate decision.
- Don't give out your social security number to people you don't know.

CLIP & SAVE 

SENATOR BRUCE PATTERSON 866-262-7307

IMPORTANT SENIOR HOTLINES:

Legal Hotline for Seniors 800-347-5297
Medicare/Medicaid Assistance 800-803-7174
Social Security 800-772-1213
Veterans Information & Assistance . . 800-827-0648
State Income Tax Refund Info 800-827-4000

CONSUMER HELP HOTLINES:

Consumer Protection 877-765-8388
FIA Energy Assistance 800-292-5650
Health Care Fraud 800-24-ABUSE

To find out more about the **Senior Alliance** visit their website at www.aaa1c.org



Senator
Bruce Patterson

Serving the 7th District

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909
PHONE: (517) 373-7350 TOLL FREE: (866) 262-7307
FAX: (517) 373-9228
EMAIL: senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov
WEBSITE: www.senate.michigan.gov/patterson

Dear Friend:

In traveling throughout the 7th district as your State Senator, I've had the privilege of meeting and talking with many seniors. I welcome hearing your concerns and enjoy listening to your ideas.

With summer right around the corner, I want to update you on several issues that may be of interest to you. Please do not hesitate to call me toll-free at (866) 262-7307 or e-mail me at senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov if you would like further information on any of these topics.

It is an honor to represent the people of the 7th district and I will continue to work hard on your behalf. I hope you will call on me if you have any questions or concerns or need assistance with any state matter. May you be blessed with good health and happiness this year!

Sincerely,

Bruce Patterson
State Senator
7th District



Sen. Patterson Fights to Protect Vulnerable Seniors

Seniors in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities have more peace of mind thanks to Senate legislation recently signed into law. The new laws require strict criminal background checks on all potential employees, as well as fingerprints on all current employees. The laws also keep felons and those with criminal records from working as caregivers for a long time.

Michigan Senators sponsored the legislation after learning that almost 10 percent of the employees caring for Michigan's vulnerable adults have criminal backgrounds.

Nearly 100,000 Michigan residents receive care in one of 5,000 residential care facilities across the state. "It is vital they feel safe in the place they call home," Senator Patterson said. "Our most vulnerable adults should not have to worry about their protection or safety."



Telephone Discounts for Seniors

Many seniors rely on the telephone to stay in touch with family and as a lifeline for medical care. Yet a tight budget can make it difficult to pay for this essential service. Fortunately, a recent change in the law means more people can get help with the monthly bill for their landline phone. To qualify for the Lifeline Telephone Assistance program, the customer's

household income must be at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (\$14,700 for a one-person household; \$19,800 for a two-person household).

On average, most customers save about \$100 off their annual telephone bill and can block outgoing long distance calls free of charge. Eligible seniors should contact their local telephone provider to apply. To receive a "Consumer Alert" with information about the program, please contact Sen. Patterson's office toll-free at (866) 262-7307 or by e-mail at senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov.

Sen. Patterson Supports Increase to Qualify for Tax Deferment

This year, more senior households are eligible for help to make ends meet. Under a Senate bill recently signed into law, the income level is increased for those taxpayers 62 years of age and older who want to postpone paying their summer property tax until the following February 15. The household income limit jumps to \$37,500 in 2006 and \$40,000 in 2007.

Deferment of the summer tax helps many seniors because they can use their state or federal income tax refund to pay the tax. Please contact your local Treasurer for information on how to file an application.

Veteran Pension Benefit

Many poor veterans or their widows are unaware of pension benefits available to them. The pension is paid to wartime veterans with limited income or the eligible dependents of deceased wartime veterans. While the amount is modest, it can be a big help to those who qualify. For more information, including income eligibility, call the Department of Veterans Affairs toll-free 1-800-827-1000 or visit their website at www.vba.va.gov.

Save on Prescription Drugs

Prescription drugs are often an important part of good health care. Many Michigan retirees have drug benefits from their former employer. Many other seniors have signed up for the new Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage.

For seniors or other family members not yet age-eligible for Medicare, or for those without insurance drug coverage, there are still ways to safely save money on monthly prescription drugs.

- **Ask for a generic.** Unless your doctor requires a brand-name drug, ask if a generic is available.
- **Comparison shop.** Drug prices can vary from pharmacy to pharmacy. Michigan law requires that pharmacists disclose the price of a brand-name or generic drug if requested. Use this information to shop for the best price, although, for safety reasons, all prescriptions should be filled at the same pharmacy.
- **Be safe.** Share information with your pharmacist and physician to be sure you receive safe medications, including: any allergies, the names of the medications you are now taking as well as any nutritional supplements or herbal products you are taking. And always let your doctor or pharmacist know about any problems you are having with your medicines.

Learn more at the Michigan Attorney General website at www.michigan.gov/ag.



Senator Bruce Patterson is proud to list among his many awards some important to our seniors...

- The Senior Alliance, Legislative Award (2004)
- Michigan Nurses Association, "Friend of Nursing" Award (2004)
- Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners, Advocate of the Year Award (2004)